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ABSTRACT

Data from the National Household Education Survey (NHES, 1995) were analyzed to compare parents' and students' variation in their perceptions of various variables predicting school violence: incidences of being attacked while in school, availability of substances of abuse (drugs, alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes), and actual use of these substances while in school (getting high). Results indicate that while there is variation in perceptions of variables not under the parents' or schools' control (such as assignment of schools, student friends' aspirations) as good predictors of school violence, both parents and students see some practices and policies as also significantly associated with school violence. Specifically, aversive school climates, ineffective proactive school safety actions in response to school violence, poor enriching environments and less parental involvement are perceived by parents as accounting for most of the variance in school violence and, therefore, parental dissatisfaction with these type of schools. Students on the other hand, see predictor variables such as getting high and easy availabilty of substances of abuse as more of a problem than actual incidences of being attacked. Incidentally, enriching environments such as positive school experience, parental involvement and a child's friends' high aspirations are deterrents of school violence. Implications for school and parental practices and suggestions for future research are discussed. (Contains 50 references.) (Author)

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Running head: PARENT/STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF VIOLENCE

Parents' versus students' perception of predictors of violence and substance abuse in schools: psychological and contextual factors

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Abstract

Data from the National Household Education Survey (NHES, 1995) were analyzed to compare parents' and students' variation in their perceptions of various variables predicting school violence: incidences of being attacked while in school, availability of substances of abuse (drugs, alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes), and actual use of these substances while in school (getting high). Results indicate that while there is variation in perceptions of variables not under the parents' or schools' control (such as assignment of schools, students friends' aspirations) as good predictors of school violence, both parents and students see some practices and policies as also significantly associated with school violence. Specifically, aversive school climates, ineffective proactive school safety actions in response to school violence, poor enriching environments and less parental involvement are perceived by parents as accounting for most of the variance in school violence and, therefore, parental dissatisfaction with these type of schools. Students on the other hand, see predictor variables such as getting high and easy availability of substances of abuse as more of a problem than actual incidences of being attacked. Incidentally, enriching environments such as positive school experience, parental involvement and a child's friends' high aspirations are deterrents of school violence. Implications for school and parental practices and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Parents' versus Students' Perception of Predictors of Violence and Substance Abuse in Schools: Psychological and Contextual Factors

Although polls show that the highest goal of the United States' adults is drug and violence free schools (Elam, 1990), and one of the national goals is that "by the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997. p.4), the publics' concern over violence and drug use has not ameliorated (Elam & Rose, 1995). Surprisingly, research on school violence has not kept phase with the public's heightened concern. For example, there was only one reference during 1995 and 1996 and two during 1997 to research on school violence in the annual meeting program for the American Educational Research Association (AERA, 1995, 1996, 1997). Additionally, most of the research on school violence has focused on social-demographic factors, frequencies of occurrences, rampant use of alcohol and drugs, easy access to weapons, and the role of the media (Frost, 1986; Molitor & Hirsch, 1994; Tullock, 1995; Valois, McKeown, Garrison, & Vincent, 1995; see also Avery, 1996). Such studies fail to establish reciprocal relationships between predictors of school violence and substance abuse in schools. However, the few studies that have endeavored to establish reciprocal relationships between school violence and predictor variables have identified contextual variables such as: poverty overridden communities (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985), middle school mismatched environments (Anderman &.Kimweli, 1997), school contextual variables such as dangerous places in schools and unfair/inconsistent school rules (Kimweli & Anderman, 1997). These studies clearly demonstrate the importance of identifying and separating contextual and psychological factors in order to successfully disentangle and interpret school violence and substance abuse.

School Violence

Theories and past research have suggested that structured environments, positive climates (Weishew & Peg, 1993), role models (negative), a sense of belonging (White, 1995), gang activity, weapon possession and perception of one's social environment as dangerous (Sheley & Brewer, 1995), public schools (Valois, McKeon, Garrison, & Vincent, 1995), problem school behavior, theft, how adolescents spend their time and school achievement (Salts, Lindholm, Goddard, & Duncan, 1995, see also Beauvais, Chavez, Oetting, Deffenbacher, & Cornell., 1996; Furlong, Babinski, Poland, Munoz, & Boles, 1995), cohesiveness of the family and presence of an informal network of kin and friends during adolescence (Rivara & Farrington, 1995), parental involvement (Jones, 1980; Jones & Jones, 1981; Schmuck & Schmuck, 1983) and extent of substance abuse problem (Goldstein, Apter, & Harootunian, 1984) are related to either behavioral problems, violence and/ or substance abuse. However, these studies focus on either the student, school or student and school as units of analysis. As a result, current violence intervention programs are not only limited by virtue of their focusing on students and /or schools and by their lack of parental input, but also by their being retroactive.

School Violence Intervention Programs

Several school violence intervention programs have been formulated. Nadel et al. (1996) outlines the Safe Harbor School-Based intervention currently being used by the New York school system. Although this Safe Harbor program focuses on three important levels on which violence occurs, namely, the individual, interpersonal relations, and school (social context), it is inherently a victim–assistance driven model. Similarly, the Richmond Youth Against Violence (see Farell, Meyer, & Dahlberg, 1996) and the Brainpower program (Hudley & Friday, 1996) are also limited by virtue of their focus on African-American and Latino adolescents. Powell et al. (1996) evaluates 15 other youth violence prevention programs and Orpinas et al. (1995) evaluates teacher-based interventions.

The limitations of most of these programs stems not only from the proactive stance and lack of research (see Johnson & Johnson, 1996 for a comprehensive review of conflict resolution and peer mediation programs), but also from the fact that both students' and parents' perception of predictors of school violence are assumed to be similar. Consequently, only students' perspectives are taken into account in the formulation of these programs. In order to devise effective programs for school violence prevention, as Satcher, Powell, Mercy, and Rosenberg (1996) point out, the existing programs need to be complemented by activities designed to modify exposure at the family, peer, community, and societal level" (p.v1). Our knowledge of these contextual factors will be enhanced by an examination of both the students' and the parents' perceptions of predictors of violence. Understanding similarities, differences and/or variations in students' and parents' perception of predictors of school violence is one step towards this goal (see suggestions for future research questions raised by Rohrbach, Donofrio, Backer, & Montgomery, 1996). This research undertakes this endeavor.

Prevention of School Violence and Contextual Factors

Children, according to ecological systems theory, do not live or operate in isolation. Consequently, school violence prevention programs cannot ignore all elements of the Microsystems in which children live. Bonfenbrenner's (1979, 1986, 1992) exosystem, i.e., environments that include settings that children do not enter, but affect them, such as parental attitudes and beliefs, are central to this research. Specifically, parents' perceptions of their children's school settings and the children's perceptions of their Microsystems (the setting for the child's behavior and activities).

To date, research on school violence has not focused on parents and students as units of analyses. Consequently, this research not only uses parents' and students' perception of school violence and substance abuse, but also regresses, the variables mentioned above (first paragraph) as being related to violence, on three dependent

variables identified as constituting school violence and substance abuse (see Boothe et al. 1994; Kimweli & Anderman, 1997). The variables outlined above and identified by research and theory as related to school violence are reclassified into the following variables: school choice and parental satisfaction with the choice (assigned versus not assigned); aversive school climate characterized by incidences of stealing, bullying, gang activity (presence), presence and availability of weapons; school response to drugs and violence, safety actions taken by the school and parents such as the hiring of security guards, metal detectors etc., discipline policy and adherence to it, availability of drug education and perception of school being as safe as the neighborhood; enriching environments, positive school climate (child enjoys school, teachers like each other), parental involvement/parental aspirations for the child (see Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997), open discussions about drugs and violence, and a child friends' value for good grades and behavior.

Definition of School Violence

Despite the federal government's guidelines in defining violence as "simple and aggravated assault", and the inclusion of robbery and rape in those guidelines (Bastian & Taylor, 1991), confusion and diversity of opinion as to what constitutes violence abounds (Furlong, Babinski, Poland, Munoz, & Boles, 1996). Consequently, Alexander and Longford (1992) call for a definition that focuses on the most serious behaviors. Thus, for the purposes of this study, stealing, bullying and mere presence of weapons among others are not considered as violent acts, but as elements of an aversive school climate. Violence is defined as incidences of physical attack or involvement in a fight, witness of a physical attack and /or reports of incidences of being attacked referred to as "secondary victimization" (attack by proxy). Substance abuse is defined as easy availability of drugs in school and incidences of students getting high while at school. Utilizing Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as a theoretical framework, this study seeks to investigate

whether there are similarities, difference and/ or variations between students' and parents' perceptions of predictors of school violence and substance abuse.

Method

Sample

Data for this study come from the 1993 National Household Education Survey (NHES; National Center for Education Statistics, 1995). The NHES: 95 school and discipline survey data, is ideal for this research because it was specifically designed to measure parents' and students' responses to questions related to safety and discipline in school. Additionally, the survey provided general perceptions of the learning environment: school discipline, rules, student norms, academic challenge; parental expectations, parental involvement and efforts to educate students about drugs and alcohol use and safety in schools (NCES, 1996). The safety and discipline sample component of the NHES data, includes data for 6,504 students in grades 6 through 12. In this sample 25.5 % of the participants were minorities, 50.1% were female, and 90.7 % attended public schools. Students in the sample came from varied backgrounds (White 74.5%, Black 15.5%, American Indian or Alaskan Native 0.8%, Asian or Pacific Islander 2.0%, some other race 7.2%). Additionally, Hispanic white students were classified as white and Hispanic Black students were classified as Black. Overall 14.4% identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin and 84.6 as not of Hispanic origin. Family income for the students' household in this sample varies from $ 5000.00 to $ 75,000.00 per year. The safety and discipline parent component sample of the NHES data included 12, 680 parents of third to

twelfth graders, so there is a matching case of each of the 6, 504 students interviewed (students are matched with their parents).

The NHES data set involved a complex sample design, and since standard statistical programs such as SPSS and SAS assume simple random assignment of subjects, the standard errors produced by these programs often may be inappropriate for such complex data sets. Consequently, all final analyses were performed using the WESTVAR PC software package, using the appropriate design weights, and are generalizable to the entire civilian, non-institutionalized population of the United States and for subgroups of the population (NCES, 1997).

Construction of Dependent Variables

Three dependent variables were created (see Table 1 for sample items). The first dependent variable represents the frequency of being attacked in school (a sum of the yes responses). The second variable, getting high at school, is a frequency of responses to all of the questions dealing with being high or taking drugs, alcohol and marijuana while at school. Sample items are presented in Table 1. The final dependent variable represents perceptions of easy availability of substances of abuse in schools.

Attacked. Students answered "Yes" and "No" to various questions relating to being bullied and physically assaulted. The measure was calculated from the summation of the "Yes" responses. Sample items are displayed in Table 1.

Getting high at school. This variable is the summation of the "Yes" responses to all of the questions dealing with being high or taking drugs, alcohol, and marijuana while at school. Sample items are presented in Table 1.

Availability of substances at school. This measure was developed from Likert-type responses to items asking how easy it is to get various illegal substances while at school (1 = very easy, 4 = impossible). This scale is the mean responses on these items. The scale displayed good internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87).

Construction of the Independent Variables

Demographic variables such as race, gender, social economic status, and age of the children, and non-public schools were eliminated from the study since they were not significant. Indeed, an earlier study using the same data and studying school violence (using the same variables) found these variables to be non-significant (see Kimweli & Anderman, 1997). Consequently, only four sets of predictor variables were developed (see Table 1). School choice variables included school assignment (assigned or not assigned) and parents satisfaction with the choice. In the NHES study, students were not asked to respond to these types of questions. Thus, only the parents' responses are used in both creating the scale and in subsequent analysis.

Contextual school environmental variables included two sets of variables: aversive school climates, and school responses to drug use and violence. The aversive school climate is composed of scales that measure the presence of weapons in school, stealing, gang activity, and incidences of bullying. The school responses' set is comprised of variables that measure presence of safety measures to curb school violence, presence of a discipline policy and its application to drug and alcohol use, drug education and perceptions of school being as safe as the respondent's neighborhood.

Psychological predictors include indices of positive school climate, parental involvement and candid frank discussions of substance abuse and violence, parental

aspirations and expectations, child's friends' aspirations and whether parents allow their children to smoke or to drink.

For dichotomous variables, scales were developed using the summation of "yes" responses. For the Likert-type responses, scale development was guided by factor analysis. Scales for these items represent the mean response of these items. The scales displayed good internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha > .70).

Assignment of school. Respondents answered "Yes or No" to items asking them if the school their children attended was a public school, whether it was in their neighborhood and if it was assigned to them or not. The scale is the summation of the "yes" response.

Parental satisfaction with the child's' school. This scale was developed from a Likert-type items that asked the parents if they were very satisfied (1) or dissatisfied (4) with the school their child attends, with the teachers, with the academic standards of the school, and with the order and discipline of the school. Sample items are displayed in Table 1.

Gang activities in school. Students answered "Yes" or "No" to items asking questions relating to gang activity while at school. Such questions include: "Any students in fighting gangs?" "Does child belong to a gang?" The scale is the summation of the "Yes" responses. Refer to Table 1 for additional sample items.

Weapons at school. Students answered "Yes" and "No" to items asking various questions on whether or not students brought a particular weapon to school. The scale is the summation of all the "Yes" responses. Refer to Table 1 for sample items.

Talk to parents about school/ parental involvement. This scale is the summation of all the "Yes" responses to questions inquiring as to whether the child talks to parents about various school issues and whether parents participate in various school activities. Sample items are displayed on Table 1.

Positive school climate. Students answered "Yes" and "No" to items asking if the child was challenged in school, whether the child enjoys school, if the teachers respect each other etc. Sample items are presented in Table 1.

Stealing. Students answered "1= strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree" to items asking if things had been stolen from the student, from his/ her locker, desk and if students saw things taken by force. See Table 1 for sample items.

Bullying. This scale is composed of items that specifically asked if child had been bullied or witnessed bullying and in case of the parents if they had heard that bullying had been experienced by their children. The scale is the summation of the "yes" responses.

School safety actions. Respondents answered "Yes or No" to items asking if the school had security guards, metal detectors, regular lock checks etc. See sample items in Table 1. The scale is the summation of the " yes" responses to these items.

Drug education. The respondents answered "Yes or No" to items asking if the school had a drug education program and " Yes or No" to questions asking the mode of presentation: whether it is a part of a regular course or various other types of modes. The scale is the summation of the "yes" responses to these items. Sample items are displayed in Table 1.

Perception of school and neighborhood as safe. Respondents answered Likert-type items asking how they rated their school and neighborhood relative to each other in terms

of safety. The scale is the mean response of the respondents' rating (sample items are displayed in Table 1).

Parent's thinking it is ok for their children to use alcohol and/or smoking. Respondents answered several items that asked them if they thought their parents thought it was all right for them to smoke or drink alcohol or, in case of the parents, if they thought it was all right for their child to smoke or drink alcohol. The scale is the summation of the "yes" responses (refer to sample item table). A similar variable was created for children's friends thinking it is all right for the child to smoke and/ or drink. This variable was eliminated from the analysis since it had very few cases and was consequently insignificant.

Child's friends' positive aspirations. Respondents rated in a Likert-type item (on a scale of 1-very important to 4-not at all-important), their perception to items asking whether their friends (or the child's friend in case of parents), thought it was important to work hard for grades and to behave well. The variable is the mean rating of the items Sample items are displayed in Table 1.

Parental expectations. This scale is composed of items asking respondents if they thought their child will graduate from high school, will attend school after high school or if the child will graduate from a 4-year college. The scale is the summation of the "yes" responses. Sample items are displayed in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Results

Means and standard deviations for the variables are presented in Table 2, and bivariate correlations between the variables are displayed in Table 3. Multiple regressions were run to examine clusters of predictors for the three dependent variables. Results are displayed in Table 4 to Table 9. The regression analyses were run using the appropriate NHES design weights, using the WESTVAR PC statistical package; thus, all results are fully generalizable to the entire civilian, non-institutionalized population of the United States and for subgroups of the population (NCES, 1997).

Relationships between variables

An examination of the correlations presented in Table 3 indicates several noteworthy relations. Specifically, public assigned schools are perceived to be just as safe as the neighborhoods where they are located (.83, $p<.001$) and very weakly related to satisfaction with the school (.16, $p<.001$). Presence of weapons is related to incidences of attack (.31, $p<.001$), negatively related to availability of drugs (-.36, $p<.001$) and positively related to getting high at school (.39, $p<.001$), but weakly related to positive school climate (.24, $p<.001$). Satisfaction with school is highly related to positive school climate (.64, $p<.001$) and children's friends who value hard work for grades (.43, $p<.001$) and negatively related to easy availability of drugs (-.37, $p<.001$). School safety actions are not related to any of the variables, not even positive school climate!

Insert Table 2 and 3 about here

Multiple Regression Analyses

Multiple regression analyses were run examining sets of predictors of being attacked while in school, easy availability of substances of abuse, and actual use of these substances in order to answer questions raised in this study. In order to answer whether there is a variation between parents' and students' perception of predictors of school violence the following three hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. First, parents' choice of public school (whether the school was assigned or not assigned), and parents' satisfaction with the assignment of the school choice were entered as predictors of their children being attacked in school.

Results of this analysis (displayed in Table 4) indicate that assignment of the school accounted for 8% of the variability of the occurrences of being attacked ($R^2 = .084$) and is not a strong predictor of being attacked, but the satisfaction with the school is a strong predictor. Second, parents' perception of school climate that is considered as aversive and as conducive to school violence such as: incidences of stealing, bullying, gang activity and presence of weapons at school were entered. These variables accounted for 18% of the variability of incidences of being attacked while in school ($R^2 = .188$) and did not significantly change parents' satisfaction with the assigned school. Stealing, bullying and presence of weapons are strong predictors of being attacked.

Third, safety actions taken by the school and parents to curb violence such as hiring of security guards, discipline, drug education and enriching environments such as positive school experience, parental involvement and high aspirations for the child were entered. This model accounted for 19 % of the variability of incidences of attack

($R^2 = .190$), while incidentally reducing parents' satisfaction (0.08 to 0.06) and increasing aversive school climate standard errors but not the betas (see discussion section). Parents' allowance of their children to smoke and drink alcohol though not significant is negatively related to incidences of being attacked at school.

Insert Table 4 about here

For the students' perception, the same models were run except for school assignment and satisfaction with the school choice (students did not respond to these items). The first and second student model accounted for 10% of the variability of incidences of attack ($R^2 = .102$), while the third model accounted for 11% (attack ($R^2 = .111$). For the student model, parents that think it is all right for their students to smoke and drink is significant (.04, $p < .05$) as well as parental involvement/talk (.06, $p < .001$).

Insert Table 5 about here

Despite the fact that the children did not respond to questions regarding assignment of school and satisfaction with the assigned school's discipline and standards, both parents and their children perceive aversive school climates as contributing to being attacked (all betas for the student are significant at 0.001 level and for the parents at 0.05 for stealing and bullying, at 0.001 level for gang activity and weapons). Overall, for the attack model, aversive school climate for the parent model accounted for 18% of the variance while the student model accounted for only 10%. Parents perceive presence of

weapons as a higher predictor than the students (β = .18,$p<.001$ verses (β = .16,$p<.001$). Both parents and the students do not see the measures schools are taking for safety as ameliorating attack incidences in school (note the variance of the model increases when these variables are entered). Except for the student model, parents' allowance for their children to smoke /drink alcohol is related to incidences of being attacked at school (β = .04, $p<.5$), and friends' value for hard work for grades is unrelated to incidences of being attacked. Students' perceptions of their neighborhoods as being just as safe as the school is related to incidences of being attacked while for the parents it is unrelated to being attacked (for student β=.04, $p<.01$), the other variables are included in the model.

To answer the question as to whether parents' and students' perception of predictors of availability of drugs and children getting high at school varied, the same variables were run in the same order as predictors. Results are displayed in Table 6. The first parental model accounted for 18 % (R^2=.181) of the variability in the perception that drugs are easily available at school, the second model 29% (% (R^2=.290), and the third model 29 % (R^2=.299). The F value is significant for the three parent models (table 6) and not for the student models (table 7).

Insert Table 6 and 7 about here

The first student model accounts for 21% of the variance of perception of drugs as easily available at school (R^2=.211), the second 30% (R^2=.302), the third 32% (R^2= .321). Similarly, most of the betas are significant except for safety actions, friends who value hard work for grades, and parental involvement. For the student models of getting

high at school, the variance explained was 19% ((R^2=.19), 38% ((R^2= .385) and 39% ((R^2=.395). Most of the betas are significant, but notable exceptions are friends who value hard work for grades, discipline, and parental involvement. The variance explained by the parents' models for getting high at school is 8% (R^2= .085), 23% (R^2= .235), and 23% (R^2=.238). Most of the coefficients are not significant except for parents who think it is all right for their children to smoke and /or drink alcohol. Parents seem to be less optimistic about drug education as a deterrence of violence than the students (β=.09, p<.001, .08, p< .001for the parent model and –.57, p< .001 and –.53, p< .001 for the student model (refer table 6 and 7). Incidentally, friends who value hard work for grades and good behavior is negatively related to getting high at school for both the student and parent model.

Insert Table 8 and 9 about here

Discussion

Results of the present study indicate that while both students and parents agree that psychological and contextual variables are predictors of violence and substance abuse, their perceptions are focused on different variables and do indeed differ. Students see psychological and contextual variables as contributing less to incidences of being attacked than do parents. For both parents and students, implementation of safety actions, increased discipline and drug education increases the variance explained by the variables as predictors for the incidences of being attacked (note the variables are significant). Perhaps indicating that these actions are consequent to increased incidences of violence rather than

preemptive or preventive; particularly since parents' satisfaction with the school assignment decreases concurrently. It is therefore, plausible that parents are interpreting increased safety measures as being indicative of a serious problem and hence the reaction of panic. Indeed, for the student model (and not the parent model), parental involvement/talk is a positive predictor of being attacked. Perhaps indicating that parents talk to the students about school violence after the fact. Additionally, parental perceptions of neighborhood or school being just as safe are unassociated with perceptions of being attacked while at school. Perhaps indicating that parents gauge school safety on neighborhoods' swelling incidences of violence while the students tend to generalize violence.

Results also indicate that parents' and students' perceptions of predictors of availability of drugs do not vary considerably (4% variance at most). Thus, both see drugs as easily available despite positive enriching climates. Parental involvement and having friends that encourage making good grades and behaving well seem to reduce perceptions that drugs are easily available. Consequently, it is plausible that children whose parents are involved with their learning and talk openly of the ills of drugs and have friends who have similar aspirations are less likely to get involved in the drug culture--good company enriches their morals. Indeed, the parameter estimates are negative for the parent model. We refer to this phenomenon as the "nerdy effect". Interestingly, parents who think it is all right for the students to smoke/drink, think such an act reduce availability of drugs, while the students see it as making drugs more available. A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that both parents and students view the problem differently. Hence parental input as well as the students' is needed in violence prevention programs.

The variation of parents' and students' perception of predictors of school violence is greater for the model predicting getting high at school (16%). Incidentally, students are more aware of what goes on in school than parents do. Yet, again, parental involvement, open talk, high aspirations for students and good company are all deterrents of getting high at school (notice friends who value hard work for grades is negatively related to getting high as school ($\beta = -0.18$, $p<0.05$). Additionally, parents have less faith in drug education than the students. Most surprising, is the finding that parents of assigned schools' perceptions of predictors of availability of drugs, decreased as the school safety response variables and enriching environments variables were entered (notice the decrease in the betas from -0.38, $p< 0.001$ {model 1} to -0.53, $p< 0.05$ {model 3} and the consistency of the variance (29% for model 2 and 3 and the consistency of all other betas-table 6). Perhaps indicating that assignment of schools is viewed unfavorably despite the schools' effort to ameliorate parents' concerns for school violence and enriching school environments. Therefore, it is plausible that assigning schools denies the parents the choice of moving or transferring their children to schools with less reported incidences of availability of drugs in the absence of affording a private school.

Implications and Recommendations

Implications

The findings of this study present several policy implications. First, schools should place safety actions, discipline actions and enforcing drug education as a matter of policy This prevention actions should be put in place even if the particular school is not considered as being at risk for school violence, rather than as interventions after the fact,

so as not to raise alarms of a problem gone amok within the community. Secondly, parents should get involved with their children's day-to- day school activities, talk openly about drugs, and violence and encourage their children to be friends of children with the same aspirations--bad company corrupts good morals. Thirdly, the policy of assigning schools should be re-evaluated with the aim of allowing parents who cannot afford private schools a choice to transfer their children to other schools that may not have school violence and substance abuse problems. Perhaps the debate over the private schools' voucher system has merit and hence needs to be investigated empirically. Further, as the findings of this study indicate current parental and student's perceptions of positive school climates is that such climates do not deter incidences of being attacked and getting high while at school (for the parents). It is plausible that these perceptions of positive school climates lack parental input. Indeed, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) in their review of the literature on why parents become involved in their children's education concluded that "those who wish to increase parental involvement and extend the benefits it offers must focus at least in part on the parents' perspective in the process" (p.36). Consequently, policy makers and administrators will need to formulate and implement more tangible and feasible positive climates that parents view as effective. Perhaps parents and students with high aspirations, good behaviors and good grades can be used as mentors, role models or tutors to students who are identified as having violence/drug problems.

Recommendations

Although school violence provokes retroactive programs that in turn seem to add to the panic situation, these retroactive programs do draw attention to school violence and raise public awareness (see Tagami, 1997 for the Heath High school in Kentucky school shooting and Russell, 1997 for the President Clinton's reaction). The public awareness in turn results in measures aimed at curbing school violence. Notwithstanding, the results of this analysis point to the need for proactive violence prevention measures. Consequently,

the following recommendations that target teachers, the curriculum, and the students are warranted.

1. The GANADEN model proposed by Kimweli and Anderman (1997) has some promise. This model calls for teacher training that focuses on a quadratic role: detective, parent, psychologist and teacher training perspectives.
2. Advances in subjective well-being indicate that one's subjective well-being can be increased by reducing one's negative affect (see Diener, 1994). Psychodrama[1], a technique developed by Moreno (1985; see Worell & Remer, 1992 for this technique's applicability to human development theories) is a promising technique that can be used to ameliorate negative affect such as feelings of anger, frustration, hate, hopelessness, helplessness and feelings of alienation[2]. Psychodrama allows individuals to express their feelings in a controlled way yet achieving cartharsis and self-awareness. Thus, it is recommended that schools incorporate psychodrama exercises in their curriculum[3]. This will require the services of counseling psychologists. Interestingly, despite advances in and new knowledge on emotions, school curriculums has not incorporated emotions and well-being of students. Students' evaluation of their well-being and knowledge on how to manage/reduce their ill-being will foster positive interactions within the school. Surprisingly, despite the pervasiveness of violence and sexual harassment in the media, ills of violence has not entered the social study literature and curriculum of our schools. Thus, it is recommended that social studies textbook writers and developers of school curriculums incorporate ills of violence in both primary and secondary school curriculums.

Methodological Problems

First, as with all survey studies, this research can not establish cause/effect relations despite the fact that the instrument was specifically designed to measure perceptions of

school safety and discipline. Thus, experimental research to investigate causes of violence and substance abuse among school aged children is needed. Secondly, studies involving questionnaire research rely on subjective response scales, thus failing to fully define constructs. This is the case in this study. Thirdly, despite great effort to eliminate correlated/redundant variables that measure violence and substance abuse, there were, to some degree, some intercorrelations among the independent variables that may have affected the results. Such variables may include stealing, presence of weapons etc. Finally, some important predictors may have been omitted since they were not included in the surveys such as parental/relatives use of drugs, alcohol, possession and ownership of weapons, TV programs viewed, vandalism, deviant behaviors etc.

Table 1

Sample items

Variables	Sample Items	Scale
	DEPENDENT VARIABLES	
Attacked in School		
Have you heard/do you know of any teachers/students being physically attacked		1= Yes, 2= No,
Did you see an incident like this happen?		
Did it happen to you this school year?		
Getting high at school:		
Have you heard of/have you seen any students (having been) drunk or showing the effects of alcohol when they at (child's/your) school this year?		
(Have you heard of/have you seen) any students (having been) high on other drugs such as marijuana. LSD, or cocaine when they were at (child's/your) school this year?		1= Yes, 2= No
Availability of Substances		
How difficult would it be to get beer/wine at school		1= Very easy
How difficult would it be to get cigarettes at school		4= Impossible
How difficult would it be to get marijuana at school		(α= 0.87)
How difficult would it be to get liquor at school?		
	INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	
Aspirations		
Think child/self will graduate from high-school		1= Yes, 2= No
Think child/self will graduate from college		
Think child/self will attend school after high school		
Child attending or enrolling in school		
Gang Activities at School		
Any students in fighting gangs		1= Yes, 2= No
Any incidents from gang activity		
Child belongs to a gang		
Stealing and concern for being stolen from		
Things stolen from lockers or desks		1= Yes, 2= No
Things stolen from you (child)		
Did you see/child see an incident like this happen to someone's		
Weapons at School		
Child brought nunchucks to school		1= Yes, 2= N0
Child brought gun to school		

Child brought weapons to school
Child brought knife to school
Child brought brass knuckles to school
Child brought razor blade to school
Child brought mace to school
Child brought spiked jewels to school
Child brought stick, club, bat to school
Other students bring weapons
Child brought other weapon

Talk to Parents about School/parental involvement — 1= Yes, 2= No
Child talked about school events
Child talked about drugs
Child talked about threat/danger
Parent/guardian attended school meeting, school or class event, sports, science fair etc.

Positive school climate — 1= Yes, No = 2
Would you agree/disagree
Child is/I am challenged at school
Child enjoys/I enjoy school
In (child's)/my school, most students and teachers respect each other

Assignment of school — 1 = Yes, No = 2
Does child go to a public school?
Is it (his/her) regularly assigned school or a school that you chose?
Is (child's school located in the neighborhood where you live?

Satisfaction with school — 1 = very satisfied, 4 = very dissatisfied
With the school child attends this year?
With the teachers (child) has this year?
With the academic standards of the school?
With the order and discipline at the school?

Parents OK smoking/alcohol use — Yes =1, No = 2
{Do you/(do you parents/guardian) adult respondent) think is all right for child/you to smoke cigarettes? Drink alcohol?

Safety of school/neighborhood — 1 = safer than school, 3= not as safe
Would you say your neighborhood is....?
Would you say {(child's) /your} school is...

Friends' view of hard work/good behavior
Does (child's/ your) friends at school think it is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to work hard for good grades?

Does (child's/ your) friends at school think it is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to behave in school?

1 = Very
4 = Not at very

Bullying and concern for being bullied — 1 = Yes, No = 2

(Have you heard/do you know) of any incidents of bullying during this school year?
Did (child/you) see an incident like this happen to someone else?
Did it happen to (child)/you), this school year?

Parent/school safety action — 1 = Yes, No = 2

Have you done any of the following things to help (child) avoid trouble?
Told (him/her) not to travel a certain route?
Talked about how to avoid trouble?
{Do you know if (child's) school takes/does your school take} any particular measures to ensure the safety of students? For example. Does the school have...?
Security guards?
Metal detectors?
Locked doors during the day?
Regular locker checks?
Hall passes required to leave class?

School discipline policy — Yes =1, No = 2

As far as you know, does (child's) school have a written discipline policy?
Does it cover alcohol and other drug possession, use, and distribution?

Friend's OK use of substances of abuse — Yes =1, No =2

Do your friends at school think it is all right to?
Smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, smoke marijuana, use drugs?

Drug education — Yes =1, No =2

There are many different ways that alcohol or other drug education can be presented to students. Did (child/you) receive alcohol or other drug education in school this year:
As part of the regular courses, like science, health, PE?
As a special course about alcohol or other drugs?

Table 2.

Means and Standard Deviations for Predictor Variables. N= 6,504

Variable	Mean	SD
Assigned school	.79	.40
Bullying	.38	.48
Friends value hard work	3.3	1.2
School Discipline	.95	.21
Gang activity at School	.18	.39
Parent OK smoking/alcohol	.9E	.19
Positive school climate	9.10	2.54
Safety action taken	.99	9.0E
Satisfaction with school	1.56	.63
Stealing	1.05	1.4
Parental involvement	.98	.115
Weapons in school	.19	.39
Safety school/neighborhood	1.8	.38
Drug Education	.67	.46

Table 3

Bivariate Correlations Between Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Assigned School	_																
2. Attacked	.11	_															
3. Availability of drugs	-.19	-.25	_														
4. Bullying	.13	.29	-.26	_													
5. Friends value grades	.12	.18	-.22	.24	_												
6. Discipline	.03	.02	.02	-.00	-.03	_											
7. Drug Education	.00	-.01	.09	.02	-.05	.08	_										
8. Gang Activity	.09	.26	-.34	.24	.14	.14	.01	_									
9. Getting High	.09	.27	-.47	.23	.15	.00	-.05	.04	_								
10. Parent OK Smoke/Alc	-.01	.00	-.04	-.00	.02	-.01	-.01	.03	.06	_							
11. Positive Sch. Climate	.21	.22	-.35*	.25	.43*	.25	-.05	-.09	.21	.23	_						
12. Safety Action	.09	.04	-.06	.05	.03	.04	.00	.03	.03	.01	.00	_					
13. Satisfaction	.16*	.27	-.37	.31	.43	-.05	-.08	.24	.28	-.04	.64*	.01	_				
14. Safe Sch/Neighbor	.83*	.17	-.28	.19	.17	-.02	-.06	.24	.20	.02	.00	.28	.06	_			
15. Stealing	.11	.28	-.29	.35	.23	.01	.0	.28	.28	-.02	.00	.26	.04	.34	_		
16. Parental involvement	-.00	.04	-.02	.06	-.00	.03	.04	.00	.02	-.00	-.04	-.02	.03	.02	-.02	_	
17. Weapons	.10	.31*	-.36*	.27	.17	.01	-.03	.34	.39*	.00	.24*	.04	.04	.29	.23	.33	_

Note: $p < 0.001$ *

Table 4.

Parent Estimated Full-Sample Regression Coefficients for Attack Model

Predictor	parameter estimate		
Model	1	2	3
Step 1			
School Choice			
Assigned	0.13 (0.150)	0.06 (0.088)	0.05 (0.100)
Satsifac	0.17 (0.030)***	0.08 (0.044)*	0.06 (0.031)*
Step 2			
Aversive School Climates			
Sealing		0.03 (0.017)*	0.03 (0.017)
Bullying		0.12 (0.063)*	0.12 (0.061)*
Gang activity		0.12 (0.053)**	0.12 (0.058)*
Weapons		0.18 (0.076)**	0.18 (0.078)**
Step 3			
School Response to Violence and Drug use			
Safety action		0.18 (0.01)	0.029 (0.01)
Discipline		0.02 (0.05)	0.054 (0.06)
Drug education		0.05 (0.00)	0.016 (0.00)
School/neighborhood safety		0.014 (0.03)	0.023 (0.04)
Step 4			
Enriching Environments			
[4]Parent OK smoking/alcohol			-0.01 (0.037)
Positive school climate			0.00 (0.003)
Friends value hard work for grades			0.01 (0.012)
Parental involvement/talk			0.09 (0.233)
	R^2= 0.084	R^2= 0.188 0.00	R^2= 0.191
	F= 213.74***	F= 218.22***	F= 154.75

Note: p<.001***, p<.01**, p<.05*, Standard errors are in parenthesis

Table 5.

Student Estimated Full-Sample Regression Coefficients for Attack Model

Predictor parameter estimates

Model	1	2	3
Step 1			
Aversive School Climates			
Sealing	0.04 (0.006)***	0.03 (0.006)***	0.03 (0.007)***
Bullying	0.15 (0.021)***	0.14 (0.023)***	0.14 (0.023)***
Gang activity	0.07 (0.025)***	0.06 (0.023)**	0.05 (0.022)**
Weapons	0.16 (0.016)***	0.14 (0.018)***	0.14 (0.018)***
Step 2			
School Response to Violence and Drug use			
Safety action		0.14 (0.057)**	0.13 (0.060)**
Discipline		-0.02 (0.019)	0.00 (0.023)
Drug education		0.03 (0.030)	0.02 (0.030)
School/neighborhood safety		0.05 (0.017)**	0.04 (0.017)**
Step 3			
Enriching Environments			
Parent OK smoking/alcohol			0.04 (0.023)*
Positive school climate			0.01 (0.006)
Parental involvement/talk			0.06 (0.021)***
	R^2= 0.102	R^2= 0.106	R^2=0.111
	F= 140.40***	F=81.91	F= 60.77

Note: p< .001***, p<.01**, p<.05*, Standard errors are shown on parenthesis

Table 6.

Parent Estimated Full-Sample Regression Coefficients for Availability of Drugs Model

Predictor parameter estimates			
Model	1	2	3
School Choice			
Step 1			
Assigned	-0.52 (0.028)***	-0.38 (0.056)***	-0.34 (0.058)***
Satisfac	-0.38 (0.061)***	-0.20 (0.057)***	-0.13 (0.061)**
Step 2			
Aversive School Climate			
Sealing		-0.04 (0.018)*	-0.04 (0.021)*
Bullying		-0.07 (0.028)**	-0.06 (0.035)*
Gang activity		-0.28 (0.043)***	-0.28 (0.029)***
Weapons		-0.29 (0.084)***	-0.29 (0.084)**
Step 3			
School response			
Safety action		-0.06 (0.188)	-0.04 (0.187)
Discipline		0.02 (0.124)	0.01 (0.147)
Drug education		0.09 (0.021)***	0.08 (0.019)***
School/neighborhood safety		-0.18 (0.048)***	-0.18 (0.047)***
Step 4			
Enriching environments			
Parent OK smoking/alcohol			-0.15 (0.051)***
Positive school climate			-0.03 (0.009)***
Friends value hard work for grades			-0.01 (0.042)***
Parental involvement/talk			-0.07 (0.076)*
	R^2= 0.181	R^2= 0.291	R^2= 0.299
	F= 172.65***	F= 278.21**	F= 224.72**

Note: p<.001***, p<.01**, p<.05*, Standard errors are shown in parenthesis

Table 7.

Student Estimated Full-Sample Regression Coefficients for Availability of Drugs Model

Predictor parameter estimates

Model	1	2	3
Step 1			
Aversive School Climates			
Sealing	-0.04 (0.010)***	-0.03 (0.009)***	-0.02 (0.009)***
Bullying	-0.08 (0.025)***	-0.04 90.0230*	-0.04 (0.024)
Gang activity	-0.35 (0.028)***	-0.26 (0.028)***	-0.25 (0.028)***
Weapons	-0.46 (0.030)***	-0.35 (0.026)***	-0.33 (0.029)***
Step 2			
School Response to Violence and Drug use			
Safety action		-0.05 (0.116)	-0.04 (0.119)
Discipline		0.23 (0.026)***	0.16 (0.030)***
Drug education		-0.57 (0.043)***	-0.53 (0.037)***
School/neighborhood safety		-0.13 (0.023)***	-0.09 (0.023)***
Step 3			
Enriching Environments			
Parent OK smoking/alcohol			-0.21 (0.038)***
Positive school climate			-0.04 (0.004)***
Friends value hard work for grades			-0.17 (0.01)**
Parental involvement/talk			0.07 (0.039)
	R^2=0.211	R^2= 0.302	R^2=0.320
	F=205.86	F= 237.65	F=167.11

Note. p<.001***, p<.01**, p<.05*, Standard errors are shown in parenthesis

Table 8.

Student Estimated Full-Sample Regression Coefficients for Getting High at School Model

Predictor parameter estimates

Model	1	2	3
Step 1			
Aversive School Climates			
Sealing	0.02 (0.005)***	0.01 (0.005)	0.01 (0.005)
Bullying	0.07 (0.021)***	0.04 (0.020)*	0.04 (0.020)*
Gang activity	0.21 (0.018)***	0.14 (0.016)***	0.13 0.016)***
Weapons	0.27 (0.027)***	0.18 (0.021)***	0.17 (0.022)***
Step 2			
School Response to Violence and Drug use			
Safety action		0.06 (0.012)***	0.04 (0.013)***
Discipline		-0.01 (0.043)	-0.01 (0.044)
Drug education		-0.07 (0.012)***	-0.04 (0.014)***
School/neighborhood safety		0.61 (0.011)***	0.59 (0.010)***
Step 3			
Enriching Environments			
Parent OK smoking/alcohol			0.12 (0.023)***
Positive school climate			0.01 (0.003)***
Friends value hard work for grades			- 0.01 (0.007)
Parental involvement/talk			-0.02 (0.020)
	R^2=0.194	R^2= 0.385	R^2= 0.395
	F= 261.38	F= 1194.64	F=784.07

Note: p<.001***, p<.01**, p<.05*, Standard errors are shown in parenthesis

Table 9

Parent Full-Sample Regression Coefficients for Getting High Model

Predictor parameter estimates

Model	1	2	3
School Choice			
Step 1			
Assigned	0.09 (0.119)	0.02 (0.019)	0.01 (0.028)
Satisfac	0.17 (0.115)	0.07 (0.040)	0.05 (0.062)
Step 2			
Aversive School Climate			
Sealing		0.02 (0.030)	0.02 (0.029)
Bullying		0.04 (0.103)	0.04 (0.100)
Gang activity		0.17 (0.148)	0.24 (0.167)
Step 3			
School response			
Safety action		-0.01 (0.047)	0.02(0.039)
Discipline		0.01 (0.060)	0.01 (0.065)
Drug education		0.00 (0.008)	0.00 (0.010)
School/neighborhood safety		0.03 (0.137)	0.04 (.0.138)
Step 4			
Enriching environments			
Parent OK smoking/alcohol			0.10 (0.026)***
Positive school climate			0.01 (0.011)
Friends value hard work for grades			0.18 (0.01)*
Parental involvement/talk			0.04 (0.063)
	R^2= 0.085	R^2= 0.235	R^2= 0.238
	F= 17.88***	F= 203.81	F= 150.68

Note: p< .001***, p< .01**, p< .05*, Standard errors are shown in parenthesis

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Endnotes

1. Psychodrama intervention requires the services of a trained counseling psychologist or social work. School personnel can acquire training that is offered either on site or through Universities that are accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) and offer counseling psychology. An adolescent version of psychodrama is currently being developed (Kimweli, 1998)
2. There is some research indicating that violent adolescents are hardened or angry since they themselves are victims of violence, and hence recycled violence.
3. Schools can have a class called world survival techniques. Students can be taught in addition to psychodrama exercises, the woes and consequences not only of school violence, sexual harassment, but also of irresponsible actions in general. Research indicates that adolescents seek psychological services only after referral by a school official.
4. Parents that think that it is all right for the students to smoke and drink alcohol factored with enriching environment factors. Perhaps because it does indicate acceptance and candidness.